E 349
.T72

TOUCHSTONE

TO THE

PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES,

ON THE

CHOICE OF A PRESIDENT.

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY PELSUE & GOULD,

No. 3 New-street.

1812.

DISTRICT OF NEW-YORK, ss.

Be it Remembered, That on the sixteenth day of July, in the thirty-sixth year of the independence of the United States of America, Pelsue & Gould of the said District, have deposited in this office the title of a Book, the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, to wit: "TOUCHTSONE TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES, ON THE CHOICE OF A PRESIDENT." In conformity to the Act of Congress of the United States, entitled, "An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the time therein mentioned." And also to an Act, entitled, "An Act, supplementary to an Act, entitled an Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints.

(L. S.)

CHARLES CLINTON,
Clerk of the District of New-York.

TO THE PEOPLE

OF THE

UNITED STATES.

Fellow-Citizens,

THERE is not a more admirable principle in the frame of our excellent constitution, than the periodical return of sovereign power into the hands of the people, for the purpose of delegating a supreme executive trust of their national concerns.

Power, in its original nature, is undoubtedly always in the people: but it is only at the periods of election, that they exhibit and maintain a constitutional sovereignty. This remark should be constantly had in view, in regard to the highest official station in their government, and should render them peculiarly jealous of their privileges in that particular.

The principal value of the right of the people to the choice of a chief magistrate, consists in the controul which it gives them over the future direction of their public affairs; a matter in which

every citizen is intimately concerned, both in his fortune and safety, and compared with which, the gratification of an idle feeling of favoritism, or the triumph of a prevailing party, to further the views of particular men, is beneath consideration.

This privilege, so precious, that it may be called both the guarantee of our liberties, and our security against the continuance of a weak or wicked administration of our affairs, requires to be exercised with wisdom and guarded with circumspection, in order not to be defrauded of its ends.

History teaches us that the liberties of the people are filched away in small parcels at the beginning. Nations have sunk in slavery from the effects of an abuse, no wise greater than is observable in a practice, which has lately obtained among the members of Congress at the seat of government; a practice which aims at filling the presidential chair, by forestalling the elective franchise, and institutes its own formalities, as a prerequisite to the choice of the people. Though the parties concerned may pretend there is nothing morally wrong, or repugnant to the spirit of the constitution in this proceeding, yet a wise and jealous people will not fail to see therein, their elective power subject to be curtailed, and take a direction at least artificial; with this further dan-

ger, that where profligate men are the actors, it is liable to entire subversion.

It is worthy of observation also, that the impulse given to an election in support of him who is the existing president, will be as strong as can possibly be effected by the intrigues and exertions of such as bask in the sunshine of official favor, or receive the emoluments of places dependant on the executive will. The president being the only person in the administration immediately subject to the elective franchise, and the other public functionaries owing their appointment to him, the whole patronage and influence of their offices will be brought into exercise, and enlisted in his behalf for the best of all possible reasons, that of keeping themselves in place. Indeed these will always form a sort of cabal in favor of the incumbent in office. It is so natural for power to attract to itself as to a centre, all that receives consequence or derives support from it, that it may be looked for as resulting from the unerring operation of cause and effect, that the presidential election will be swayed to the utmost of their ability, whose offices hang on the event. They will write labored encomiums on themselves and on their masters, and trumpet forth praises on their services and on their talents; although of the latter, their allowance may be scanty enough for the ordinary callings of life, and al-

though their services shall have had no other effect, than that of marring the public fortunes, while they made their own. They will toil and sweat to bring about a stroke of politics favorable to themselves, while matters of state are at cross purposes, and either wholly out of sight, or else beyond their capacity; they will occupy every avenue to public opinion, by glozing statements, and keep the public mind in a ferment on momentous questions, to draw off attention from the schemes by which they are aiming to continue in power.

The people at large may be said to feel a wise policy in the administering of their government, and one that is contrary thereto, as sensibly as the human body perceives a healthy or sickly atmosphere. Nor is the understanding of a citizen in the common walks of life, less capable of discerning the powers of the body politic, and the declining condition of the state, than the eye is of observing the ravages of sickness on the frame, and the bad effects of impure air on surrounding objects. Not that the wisest policy is always beneficial in immediate operation; but it would be an abuse of terms to call that policy wise, which is not calculated immediately or remotely to confer benefits on a nation. A system of public measures will show genius and wisdom in its process, where those qualities have had any thing to do

with its contrivance; whereas to place a blind reliance on experimental projects, to be constantly foiled, to grope about like one blindfold, to exhibit resources withered, domestic prosperity impaired, and foreign relations irremediably entangled, may justly excite a suspicion of the ability of those entrusted with the management of affairs.

But it is not merely unskifulness, or incompetency, that has been the cause of the zig zag course of our cabinet, and given birth to the hermaphrodite policy so injurious to our own interests, and disgraceful in the eyes of all nations. The late resort to hostilities cannot effect an oblivion of the past, nor become an act of indemnity in favor of the administration. An overweening passion for popularity, and an unwillingness to put station on the issue of strong measures, at junctures that imperiously demanded a recourse to them, it is feared have mingled their impure currents in the pool, on whose surface the public weal has been allowed to stagnate. If there are better motives through which to account for the steps, which have conducted us down the descent of political degradation, I am ignorant of them. I have heard of worse, but as they involve a turpitude that I am unwilling to ascribe to any Amecan, I shall not allow them to have had the least operation.

Considerate men of both parties, into which politics have divided the American community, lament the deplorable situation of the country, and are beginning to draw nearer to each other in attributing its real causes. I look upon this as a symptom that augurs favorably for the return of the body politic to a healthier habit; we must be sensible of a disease before we take alarm; we must ascertain its nature before we can discover or apply suitable remedies. And to what other source can we look for political regeneration, or how else escape destruction, than by the common and united efforts of all good men at this season of peril, in the cause of our country and its freedom, the price of the blood of our fathers.

I am aware it may be objected, that this manner of speaking prejudges the case of our rulers; instead of simply stating it to the understanding, and leaving its decision to the public mind. But it is sufficient to answer, that I am not engaged in developing an intricate argument, or in discussing an abstract point of metaphysical doctrine; nor could I escape the reproach of a school disputant, if I should take the method of postulate, and proposition and deduction to establish the fact of our calamities, or to prove that they are to be laid at the door of the administration. That mistakes have been committed is palpable;

and whether the error is of the head or the heart, makes not an atom's difference in its pernicious effect on the state. Our political doctors have dealt in panaceas, till the quackery has ruined the public health; the question before the nation is, whether a new physician shall be called in, or those be retained in employ, who have already furnished so many proofs of inability, and whose method of treatment has grievously increased the malady, wherewith the republic has become afflicted.

And here I shall take occasion to disclose, that my principles in regard to government, are, and always have been republican, according to the sound construction of the federal constitution, which in my belief, furnishes sufficient power to the executive arm, whenever there is energy employed in the exercise; and that according to my abilities, I was instrumental in combating the mischievous tendency of measures adverse to its spirit, when the sway of our councils was in federal hands. And if I know my own sentiments, or can conclude any thing from a long course of years devoted to the simple and efficacious doctrines of republicanism, I have not in the least swerved from the path I set out in. Still I am not disposed to forego the privilege of thinking for myself on the measures of government; and of censuring where they merit censure, not-

withstanding they may be the offspring of a republican cabinet; though they may be applauded to the skies by retainers as the wisest and best, and preserve the support of the generality, who are ever prone to think favorably of those with whom they act, even when in error. The terms federalist and republican, like all others applied to denominate parties, which have heretofore sprung up in states, on a division in sentiment respecting principles or measures, have ceased to convey their original import in any great degree, and serve now principally to define different interests contending for power. There is no longer a contest about the degree of authority with which to invest government, as the safest and most salutary; the limitations of the constitution seem to be acknowledged on all hands, consistent with an abundant exercise of vigor and energy on the part of government. The chief contention between republicans and federalists, lays, concerning the persons who shall administer the government, and the disposal of places under it, of honor and profit; differing opinions on the policy of public measures, do not now fly to the constitution for support or defence, but to known effects, or probable results, as manifested by experience, deduced from reasoning, or detailed in history.

The discipline of party, grounded on political profession, is notwithstanding vastly rigorous. It

forbids the federalist and republican respectively, to impute to each other good qualities, or even good intentions. But its greatest inconvenience arises from its arbitrary tendency: forms and mandates to regulate the proceedings of parties, with a view to unity of action, being exceedingly apt to degenerate into a moral tyranny. Hence the presidency may be bestowed by intrigue without regard to fitness or qualification; hence also a shield may be furnished to weakness and imbecility, and our homage be demanded, for baneful counsels, and destructive measures.

I know of no better rule to go by, in appreciating the characters and motives of public men, than judging them according to the principles of human nature. A man's professing himself a federalist, or a republican, does not add to the powers of the mind, nor take away from the passions that rule in the breast. It neither enlarges the understanding, purifies the heart, nor elevates the conduct. It leaves the endowments and talents of the individual just as it found them; and unhappily diminishes nothing of the love of money or the love of power, two great incentives to public employment, and withal very apt to grow corrupt, as the sphere of their action becomes more extended. There is however a charm attached to the thing that is truly surprising; partaking of the common nature of delusion, by an influence

proportioned to the absurdity of pretension. A person may be influenced with the desire of conducting the affairs of the nation, and perhaps not a little enamoured of high dignity, though not otherwise chargeable with vicious propensities; if by being uniform as a party-man, he has obtained in that particular the confidence of his party; if he has acquired celebrity by a facility of writing, (which in the fashion of our days signifies great abilities) and has filled an office with decent credit; if by the aid of influential political friends, with no more of cabal than ordinarily exists for the furtherance of such objects, that person should be placed at the head of his party, and of the government, straightway like the grand Lama of the Hindoos, he becomes immaculate, and his opinions receive from his followers, reverence and the readiest conformity. As if the installation of office imparted talents not before possessed, conveyed energies which did not before exist, and created faculties on the instant, equal to whatever crisis might arise. As if the original properties of that man's constitution, and his familiar qualities, which subjected him to act and to be acted on like his fellow men, suddenly received supernatural exaltation, to put him out of the reach of error, and beyond the scope of those principles, which we apply to test the conduct of each other. Is it just, is it rational, that the rule of party should

exact the surrender of our judgment, and utter its censures on all who refuse to bow the knee to its idol? Shall reason be dethroned, to exalt in its stead a tenet of political superstition, degrading to us as freemen, and at variance with the constitution, and than which the English notion that the king can do no wrong, is incomparably safer?

To the people, who in the calm exercise of their reason will discern the truth, it belongs to determine, whether their honor and their welfare has been promoted by the policy of their public councils; whether those whom they have clothed with their confidence, and entrusted with the charge of their concerns, have displayed abilities proportionate to the high reputation claimed for them by their adherents, and equal to the station they have been placed in; whether they have shown themselves to have had a single eye to the prosperity and dignity of the commonwealth, in the measures taken by them in relation to the outrages committed against it; measures, which avoiding the vindication of our rights, taught the belligerent antagonists to resort to retaliation on each other, to our still greater injury, whereby we have been compelled to appeal to arms on principles foreign to the original controversy.

I shall make no question of the justice, or even expediency, of the war in which the union is em-

barked. It is sufficient that it has been decided upon by the constituted authorities of the country, to command the animated support of all good citizens. War-makers, however, seldom are peace-makers; and it may be doubted, whether they who have not been able to maintain the relations of peace, can readily effect its restoration.

But in our republic, the duties of the citizen are not confined in war to the camp, nor in peace to the avocations and employments of civil life. The rights of the citizen become by direct implication his sacred duties. He is not vested with highly important privileges, without being placed under a correspondent obligation to exercise them with discretion, and to preserve them with fidelity. If his country has a paramount claim on his services in her defence, so also has she on his best judgment, in confiding her destinies to skilful and upright managers. Arms may obtain victories; but a wise administration alone can give efficacy to military prowess by a judicious conduct of the war, and procure for the nation, in return for its sacrifices, the advantage of a speedy adjustment of the dispute on honorable and beneficial terms.

The defence of every right attached to the sovereignty of the United States, with life and fortune, consists with the valor and patriotism of Americans. The mode only, and not the principle, may originate a difference of opinion. This

is the field for the display of political sagacity, and this admonishes to a change of public officers, if we would introduce a better system, and a sounder policy.

On behalf of the Candidate for the Presidency announced by the state of New-York, it is admitted that the matters in dispute with foreign powers, so far as they are connected with the independence of the republic, are of a nature that may not be compromised. It is nevertheless insisted, that where these have grown out of commercial objects, they have been grossly misunderstood, and a system been pursued in relation to them manifestly fallacious, and whose deleterious qualities, sure to operate upon ourselves, were of most doubtful effect on those against whom it was ostensibly directed. It is farther contended, that the policy of our public councils, in regard to the commercial interests of the United States, is fundamentally erroneous; that these interests merit and require protection; and that the inland influence, notoriously ascendant in our government under the present administration, is decidedly hostile to this object.

With regard to the Virginian Candidate, the present President, apart from the many weighty local objections to his election, and the considerations derived from the character both of his mind and of his measures, it is conceived that the in-

land, or anti-commercial influence above spoken of, which sprang from the rule of his predecessor, to whose guidance it readily submitted as the shepherd of the flock, now grown into great strength by careful fostering, and into greater conceit of its capacity and consequence, aspires to be lawgiver, and does in fact constitute a pledge, for the continuance of the same rickety system, that has parallysed our national vigor, and of views inimical to the true interests of those districts of the union, whose natural and obvious sources of prosperity arise from commercial pursuits.

It is in every body's recollection, that a suspicion of unfriendliness to the rights of the people, grounded on the declaration of leading men, and the obvious tendency of many legislative and executive acts, connected with certain odious taxes, was the cause of the downfal of the federal party, and elevation of the republican. For a few years successive upon the latter coming into power, the country prospered exceedingly, increasing in riches, and denoting every mark of augmenting strength. A widely extended commerce a flourishing interior trade, prompt demand for the productions of the soil, brisk circulation of money, whose product is always in proportion to its velocity in the public body, constant employment for every class of laboring citizens, a tranquil gov-

ernment, and ample revenues, filled the bosom with gladness, and gained much credit to our republican rulers. But it may be remarked, that those years furnished a spontaneous harvest of national felicity, to which the administration contributed nothing more, than the orderly management of interior concerns, and that the whole period furnished no test of their abilities in meeting difficulties, for none existed. Yet wise observers were not without their apprehensions, that the ostentation of economy, which put the national armor up to sale, and compressed the naval and military establishments within a dwarfish compass, thereby leaving our republic in the cheerful but dangerous plight of one devoted to festive security, though surrounded by freebooting neighbors; I say wise observers, even among republicans, would shake their heads, and doubt the soundness of the measure. The current of public opinion in its favor however was irresistible; and the devisers of it expatiated in delightful complacency on its success, in the result of elections and the fulsomeness of addresses. Happy rulers! who without one effort of genius, or the least display of skill, reap the rich reward of a people's praise, and receive the oblation of their gratefulness. Sagacious people! who decorating themselves with garlands, and throwing away their coats of mail, dance to the gay notes of mu-

sic, reckless of the foe that hangs on their borders, and insults their shores. I am no wise fond of introducing illustrations from holy writ; but for my life, I cannot divert my thoughts from the story of Samson, surrendering his locks to the allurements of Delilah.

Who can remember those halcyon days, without feeling poignant sorrow at the change, which in late years has spread despondency and distress from the green hills of the north, to the savannahs of our southern territory? Who can suppress his concern at the gloom, which now invests the political horizon, and the farther evils which seem to impend over our country? Who can conceal his chagrin at the baneful conclusion of political schemes, which imposed on our belief by specious representations, and won our consent by lofty promise? Who can forego his indignation at the counterfeit pretensions and fallacious oracles, which deprived us of benefits in actual possession, by pointing to the possibility of boundless acquisitions, and prompting the indulgence of unattainable desires?

A review of the flourishing situation of the United States, prior to the introduction of a system, which entrusted the public safety to the justice of foreign governments, instead of guarding it by the commanding energies of national force, and which contented itself with elaborate vindica-

tions of invaded rights, when the country ought to have been put in armor to defend them, will convince every dispassionate mind of the glaring errors which have been committed. At that time, the republic was in the full vigor of health, and in the possession of abundant resources, which have since been sweated, under various pretexts, into the coffers of the belligerents; it was high in the respect of foreign powers, by imputed dignity, and acknowledged strength; its credit was unbounded, and the wealth of its citizens immense; it possessed a prodigious number of hardy seamen, now very much diminished by piratical capture, and by voluntary departure from an unprotected and irregular service; but above all, the spirit of the people was lofty, and ardent, and unabased by submission to repeated humiliation. The political picture of Europe too, at that period, illy justified the notion, that an observance of justice on our part towards its governments, would insure a return of justice to us. What was to be observed there but aggression and rapine, and the blood-stained footsteps of ambition? What security that we should be exempted from ravages longer than we were prepared to repress them? A greater fallacy has never existed, than that which inculcates a belief of a controuling sense of justice over human governments. Men are kept honest in the communities of which they are

members, by the penalties of the laws, and the competency of the tribunal entrusted with their execution; but governments acknowledge no authority to which they are amenable, nor is there any protection against their fraud and violence, except in the sagacity and power of those other governments, on whom fraud and violence may be attempted. Here then was a fatal mistake, whereby the national sword ceased to be the national safeguard; and our interests were committed without guarantee to cabinet signets, on the presumption of what never existed, honor, faith and justice, in cabinets. The effects of this mistake were quickly made visible in belligerent rapacity. The unexampled progression of our country in wealth, in trade, in resources, and in population, excited jealousy; while our defenceless state offered both temptation and impunity to depredation. Jealousy of a rising nation has always been a spring of action with other powers; and most probably a feeling of this kind was among the incitements to those acts, which have been for many years the cause of the whining, the hectoring, and the buffoonery of our legislation. The conduct of our men in power, and of their majorities in our legislative assemblies, has been not unlike that of boys, who instead of resenting a blow or an injury with becoming spirit, content themselves with saying some foolish thing or other, and there-

by receive farther provocation and more abusive treatment. No sooner was the tame disposition of our rulers known, and that wrongs excited little else but a detailed statement of grievances well elucidated by arguments drawn from the the public law, with perhaps a wreaking of vengeance on certain unoffending articles of British manufacture, than one indignity succeeded another, and outrage followed upon outrage, so fast as almost to lose succession in continuity, and to preclude separation from the series. Our commerce was subjected to interruption by the British, our seamen to impressment, our coasts and ports to blockade, and, to cap the list, the foul crime of murder called for atonement from those violators of our peace. Messages to congress, remonstrances, and proclamations, were the only measure of our redress.

This cant of complaint is what has done us infinite mischief. To show an extreme sensibility to ill conduct from others without the spirit of resenting it, is in the lowest grade of political folly; for it keeps open a door for aggressions to enter at; and there is a sort of malignant satisfaction in those who bring themselves to commit violence, that prompts them to exercise it with greater willingness on such poor spiritless beings, as swell into bravado, and sink into lamentation, while

they possess size and strength equal to combating against abuse.

France,* treading on the heels of England, gave loose to excesses of a more wanton character; atrocious beyond any practised in the darkest ages. She not only authorised spoliations upon us without pretext, and presumptuously suspended the jurisdiction of the public law; but did not hesitate to violate our sovereignty in its most essential points. Where was then the spirit that animated the American people in their struggle for independence, which led through sufferings to safety, and through peril to glory? Where was the patriot fire, that inflamed the soldiers and statesmen of that day, which burned in the battle, and illumined the sessions of the representatives of the people? When the tyrant fulminated his blasting decrees, and dared to extend the yoke of his dominion over our republic, and to violate the sacred emblems of our sovereignty, why sprang not every sword spontaneous from its scabbard? Why was not the loud shout of an indignant insulted people, heard in the saloons of the Thuilleries, and in the halls of the slavish councils of the em-

---

* Alluding to the denationalizing of our Flag by the Milan decree.

pire? What damnable spell could have been so efficacious as to lay asleep the spirit of liberty in the breast of the citizen, and sink our rulers in criminal apathy, when* honor was basely blotted from our scutcheon, and freedom bled by the stab of ruffian violence? My bosom glows with indignation at the temporising, calculating, betraying policy of men administering the government of a free people, and mourns over the awful suspension of national resentment, amid enormities unprecedented and unprovoked.

At length in the year 1808, the public pulse began to beat more briskly, and vigorous measures were called for from every quarter. This indication of national feeling, though every way suited to the crisis, was nevertheless deemed unseasonable. An individual purpose required it should be checked; the illustrious Jefferson, as sagacious of foul weather as the water-fowl, had resolved to retire, and was determined to make a safe harbor before the storm. Accordingly it was announced by those, whose familiar intercourse with the administration, procured them the appellation of back-stairs gentlemen, that the injuries sustained by us from the belligerents,

---

* The Duke of Cadore had the impudence to say to the Minister of the United States, that the Americans ought to tear their declaration of independence to pieces.

were so equal as to preclude distinction, and so great as to render hostilities against both necessary and proper. Popularity! how mazy are thy ways, how antic are thy shapes, how knavish are thy expedients! The truth of a position is of no consequence with some people, so long as its conclusions are favorable to their views. That this was a scheme ingeniously devised to get rid of the responsibility of war altogether, has been contended by those, who discredited the statement on which it was built; while others have insisted, that so singular a predicament could not have been produced, without our having contributed towards it, either through unskilfulness, or misconduct. The dilemma, we were supposed to be in however, served to employ Congress, and to amuse the public, with grave speculations, and fanciful theories, on the many singular contingents in triangular warfare, and ended as was meant, in the continuance of the interdiction of trade, which some twelve or eighteen months before, had been dextrously enough introduced, under the notion and term of an embargo, to which it had no more relation, nor was intended to have, than the mere name

Now let any man of common sense, though ever so little acquainted with politics, ask himself, whether a submission to injury in the common occurrences of life, is not likely to cause its

repetition, and that too under aggravating circumstances. Let any one, who remembers the military capacities of the United States, their revenues, and power, when we first began to hear of interpolations on the law of nations, say, whether a sense of honor and a regard to the dignity and interests of the country, did not naturally lead to a resistance of encroachments by the national force, and whether a determined attitude to that effect, would not have prevented farther aggression, without the ultimate resort to war. The pretensions of the aggression in its early stage, did not make it worth while to lose by perseverance therein, the benefits of intercourse and trade, and to convert from friendship into enmity, a power armed at all points for the contest, brave, resolute and active. It cannot be concealed, that to the criminal forbearance of our administration it is owing at this time, that the whole code of public law in relation to neutral rights, is, as it were, annulled.

Something however was done to vindicate our grievances, and to manifest our displeasure at the spurious pretensions which called forth our complaints. The non-importation law was boldly enacted in the teeth of the aggression. Yes, fellow-citizens, on the silk mercers, and woollen drapers of Great Britain, did your rulers heroically take vengeance for your invaded rights. Yet

such was the infatuation of the British cabinet, that it chose rather to persist in its career of violence, than to heed our retaliation on the fabrics of silk and wool; the tears of Spitalfields, and the moans of Yorkshire cloth-halls, moved not their obdurate hearts—Our government returned to remonstrance and expostulation.

There is a kind of feeling requisite to the formation of the statesman, which bestowing energy upon the character of the man, cannot be alienated from the administration of office. Too much of it may degenerate into violence, or other vicious effects; but the total want thereof, is among the greatest imperfections. For without it, however acute and discerning the mind may be in state-conjunctures, there will seldom exist the decision to take bold steps at the critical moment. In this respect, the mere politician is wholly a different creature from the statesman. Craft and subtlety will answer the purpose of the former, as the ends to be accomplished are most frequently such as can be best effected by management and intrigue. Though to be the head of a party requires no small talents, yet the utmost possession of these, without the admixture of those energies, which prompt the soul to a courageous encounter with existing difficulties, is not sufficient to accomplish the noble character of the statesman. Not only must he be skilled in

affairs of state, and in the relations of empires, but he must feel within himself, an impulse, to guide the destinies of his country through danger to glory, rather than to seek its quiet in ignominy. We have seen in our time a great man, well enough versed in political concerns, but by habits of philosophy strongly inclined to abstraction; a sound reasoner, but too prone to rest public matters upon deductions of logic, and the explanation of public law; an able politician as exemplified in the entire devotion of a numerous party to his recommendations and opinions, but not a little suspected of originating a system, which has terminated in the total prostration of neutral rights; whose errors, (if they be such) must be greatly imputed to a scantiness of those great and lively sensibilities, which lead the executives of states to resent indignities, and teach them to redress grievances by the national arm, when redress by other means has failed.

His successor in office, and proselyte in opinions, with equal abilities to form a thesis, and to draw up a state-paper in language even less involved, probably as little tinctured with foreign predilections, as much devoted to the welfare of his country, and not more mistaken in the mode of pursuing it, is not so capable a politician, if he be a sounder statesman. But it may be doubted whether he excels his predecessor in either cha-

racter. Under his administration, while a great and powerful party has split into sections, some of which swerving from the sound principles of confederation, have slidden into politics adverse to the doctrine of republicanism, the country at the same time has lost ground in reputation, and declined in prosperity. A man must shut his eyes not to see on all sides the evidences of impoverishment, of perplexity, and of humiliation. Husbandmen, merchants, mechanics, the poorer orders who depend upon daily labor for daily subsistence, as well as those who derive an income from more independent sources, all acknowledge with sorrow and chagrin, their condition miserably changed for the worse. It is visible in the straitened circumstances of the inhabitants, in their desponding discourse, and gloomy countenance. Some disguise their fallen estates, and make a decent retreat into the country, there to pine under the remembrance of better days. Some, like soldiers under a peace establishment, make a point of going through the manual of their several professions, and regularly appear at the resorts heretofore appropriated to the purposes of traffic, exchange, purchase, and sale, as ghosts still haunt the spot rendered familiar by whatever delights of business, diversion, or affection. Farms are exposed to sale because of difficulty; houses in populous towns are untenanted through the

suppression of trade, and the failure of resources to defray expenditure. Then comes the horror of new loans gleaning the scanty remains of our blighted harvest; imposts doubled; the excise augmented; stamps to add to the nausea of the stomach; and direct taxation to purge into greater slenderness the national frame, already wasted into a skeleton, exhibiting nothing but shrivelled skin and projecting bone. Behold the effects of that system, so strenuously insisted upon as best fitted to the condition of our republic, and to secure its prosperity and repose! Let Monticello bloom in the midst of the desert; let an altar be raised there for the devotion and offerings of political pilgrims, attracted from far and near by the fame of the modern Numa; from where Mississippi pours his headlong current, to where the western lakes spread their broad bosoms like inland seas, and receive the tribute of a thousand streams.

Some advocates of the present system (and what system has not its advocates) urge as one of its benefits, that now war is declared, the distressed condition of the citizens will cause the ranks of the army to fill speedily, as a resource against starving. Thus there is comfort under every affliction, and consolation may be drawn even from reverse. It is however a sorry recompense for the ruin brought on us by impolitic

measures, that an army can be raised from its victims; it is a foolish defence of the imprudence and perverseness of administration, to cite the facility of recruiting, without demonstrating at the same time their ability to raise the revenues adequate to the support of the service; it is a notable effrontery to continue praising the genius and talents denoted by a policy, which our depressed condition proves to have been futile, and the abandonment of which might have been expected from the experience of its inefficacy.

There is a double paradox, and of the most contradictory nature, in the principles on which our government has founded the policy, whence have accrued so many ills to the country. By the one, our commerce has been made to sustain excessive severities of domestic creation, in order to cure evils of foreign infliction. By the other, a harmful and degrading dependence upon Europe, and especially upon England, was supposed to be placed in those relations of trade, which exchanged our raw materials and produce, for its manufactured commodities, while our long embargo, the back-bone of the present system, claiming existence, duration, defence, and effect, from a contrary principle, arrogated the dependence of Europe, and especially of England, upon us, for supplies and intercourse essential to its prosperity, and vital to its support.

And now after we have suffered all the evils of state empiricism; when the disorder has wasted the frame, and subdued its vigor; having seen one period pass by, when the lancet might have been used with effect, and another when amputation promised complete relief; now that we are debilitated, exhausted, decayed, we have consented to do one thing like other governments, and have in good earnest undertaken with John Bull, to try "which can do the other most harm."

But as it is not easily perceivable in what respects our relations with the belligerents in regard to abuses, essentially differed at the time hostilities were declared against one of them, from the period when the alleged equality of their aggressions suggested the idea of the triangular war, it may be permitted to scan the ground taken by our rulers for that measure, with a view to investigate its probable consequences. In so doing, it is not in the least intended to extenuate the indignities and oppressions of Britain against us; but to examine, whether under present management, we are not likely to contract ills upon ourselves infinitely greater than those we have sought to avoid; whether there is not much reason to apprehend, from the prejudices publicly avowed by those who are in the interest of the administration, from the tameness hitherto discovered in regard to the enormities of France, and from the

manifest efforts to propitiate its ruler, that a close connexion will sooner or later be brought about by the men who now compose our cabinet, if they remain in power, and lose us in the incomprehensible mazes of French policy.

I infer this result especially from the new conditions annexed to the revocation of the Berlin and Milan decrees; conditions to which we have mysteriously become parties in order to elude contesting them; for it is apparent, that since our resistance of the British orders is officially announced by the imperial government to be the rule of our exemption from the operation of its decrees, we can substantiate that exemption only so long as we conform to whatever arbitrary requisitions, the repeal of those orders may be made to depend upon.

I therefore think it extremely unfortunate, that our recourse to hostilities with England was delayed till after the receipt by our government of the French state paper, under the title of "The report of the minister of foreiga relations, to his majesty the emperor and king, communicated to the conservative senate at their sitting on the 10th March 1812." The language of this report, which is evidently intended for us, is very significant, while the objects avowed in it are of a nature that cannot fail to awaken much solicitude for ourselves, as one of the "nations" alleged to be

"engaged in the same cause," and already in the current of that vortex, which has invariably reduced the allies of France to become her dependencies, and to receive the legislation of her politics.

And it is to reflections derived from these heads, that I earnestly call the attention of the nation, as furnishing the strongest motives and most cogent reasons for a change of public officers.

That the imperial cabinet considers us as "engaged in the same cause," is incontestibly established by the terms of the decree of April 28, 1812, from the palace of St. Cloud; whereby it is proclaimed to the world, that the decrees of Berlin and Milan shall no longer be enforced against us, *in consideration* of our resisting the arbitrary pretensions advanced by the British orders in council. It is not pretended that these decrees are revoked, because they violate the sovereignty of the United States, and legalize piracy; but they "are considered no longer in force as far as regards American vessels," on a stipulation, that arrogates the right of their revival, and that implies our subjection to their authority, and our acquiescence in their objects.

The manœuvre of imperial diplomacy, whereby this very decree, although promulgated from the palace of St. Cloud in April, 1812, is made to bear date April 1811, justifies the notion, that the

decree itself, in consequence of its assumed stipulation, will be considered by the French government as subjected to that new exposition of its own pretensions and views, through the effect of the decrees of Berlin and Milan, officially declared in the said report of its minister of foreign relations in March last. The same chicanery, that enlisted us under the banners of a general cause, will be employed to retain us there; while the arch counsellors of the empire, will hasten to cement the union, by kindly according a treaty of amity and commerce, and by connecting us in the *glorious enterprizes of his majesty so essential to the independence of nations.*

With the utmost sincerity I avow the most perfect confidence in the bravery of my fellow-citizens, in the rectitude of their feelings, and in their love of country; in their fortitude under trial, and in their inflexible attachment to the liberties of America. A people thus actuated is unconquerable in the conflict of arms. But such a people is too apt to confide in the consciousness of their own integrity; to discredit the existence, and to deride the predicted effects of crafty machinations, and subtle schemes devised for their ruin. And why discredit? Is not guile as active a principle with the corrupt, as honor is with the just! Is not the success of intrigue as efficacious and gratifying to a profligate

government, as that of a campaign? That we deride, is because we cannot perceive the secret channels, the clandestine influence, constant advances and certain issue of designs, conceived with malignity, concealed by dissimulation, and resting upon artifice and wiles.

Fellow-citizens, what is known by refining in politics is not the disease of him who is now addressing you. He aims only at plainness and common sense; he follows reason in her practical illustrations; in her familiar habitudes with men and things. The lessons of the historic page, the experience of other nations ought not to pass unheeded; but if we will not listen to the voice of other times, let us not shut our eyes to the observation of our own. Where duplicity is the characteristic of a government, and insidious purposes lurk beneath its fairest-seeming measures, there is the strongest necessity to be on the watch, to anticipate its designs, and to elude its snares.

I have before spoken of the incomprehensible policy of the imperial cabinet: partial developements are made only at the intervention of considerable periods: but I have yet to learn, what is meant by the concluding paragraph of the report before spoken of "*that an oracle* which has often been pronounced by his majesty, *still more certain than the interest, the rights and the independence of the nations engaged in the same cause*," (ours among the number) "makes it an imperi-

ous and sacred law, that the French people must remain in arms." I have more belief in French imperial fraud, than in his majesty's oracles; and therefore I fear that impositions, similar to that, which so egregiously duped our administration in regard to the revocation of the Berlin and Milan decrees, will be employed to identify our cause with that of the empire, and to pursue the war till the accomplishment of his majesty's oracle, permits the French people to lay down their arms, and ourselves to taste the long banished blessings of peace.

I again deprecate being considered as at all inimical to the rescue of our neutral rights from British usurpation. The sword is unsheathed, and our privileges ought to be guaranteed before it is allowed to rest in the scabbard. But let it be wielded by men who have not shaken hands with Napoleon over an unholy compact for the destruction of England.

When I hear a retainer of the administration, a member of the congress of the United States, in the presence of that august body, invoking Almighty power to unfix the moorings of the British isles, and sink them in the ocean; I pause for a moment over the impiety of the expression; but I am led by cooler reflection to believe, that an earthly potentate may be substituted for unyielding heaven; not indeed to engulf the fast-anchored isles in the ocean's abyss, but to scath

their surface with fire and sword. I detest the sentiment and suspect the design embraced in this avowal. The madness of revenge runs headlong to perdition. Let not the cabinet errors of England form the cabinet errors of America. By the inscrutable decrees of providence British wrongs are visited on Britain; the folly of England has stretched her enemy into a gigantic size; her pressure has augmented his energies, till the exhibition is portentous and terrific to the governments of the earth. Power, say the European statists, is travelling westward; may it never travel from the imperial empire to the shores of Columbia! Maratime states may annoy; their objects are commerce and wealth. But military governments aim at territorial domination: universal empire is the principle of their constitution. Alexander led his forces to Asia: Rome sent her legions to Egypt, to Scythia, and to Gaul: Switzerland, and Holland, and Italy, are incorporated with the empire, whose armies are now blackening the coasts of the Baltic: and is it wise that we should pray for the annihilation of English power? Is it politic, that we should coalesce and confederate for the downfal of England, when the eye of conquest may have already scowled over our hills and our vales, and we next in turn may have to contend and bleed for the freedom of America.

It is one of the worst effects of weak men administering the affairs of government, that they are driven along by the current of early errors into irredeemable folly. They get entangled in the meshes of their own devices, and every subsequent attempt to free themselves from the embarrassment, serves only to involve them in greater intricacy.

The special ground of the present war is resistance to the British orders in council. The cause is admitted to be abundant; but let us inquire, whether the instant necessity of resorting to hostilities, was not in part owing to an extraneous impulse, neither creditable to the integrity nor independence of our public councils, and which threatens a malign influence over the course of the war.

It is now nearly a year since Mr. Barlow was sent to Paris to "commence the duties of minister plenipotentiary to the emperor of France."

In the letter of instructions to him from Mr. Secretary Monroe, dated July 26th 1811, several "subjects of peculiar importance" were urged upon his immediate attention; the principal of these were, to obtain indemnity for our claims on account of property unwarrantably seized and confiscated: to procure a confirmation of the *understanding* of our government, that the French decrees were revoked; and to establish a com-

mercial treaty between the United States and France. No doubt it was imagined, that Mr. Barlow's fertility of invention and skill in diplomatic concerns, copulating with the genius and magnanimity of Napoleon, would dispatch these small matters off.hand, and very soon enable the administration, to communicate to the nation, the interesting intelligence of the return to relations of amity, by one of the belligerent powers, thus happily accomplished. Vain imagination! Bitter disappointment! Mars and Apollo! how have you frustrated the fairest cabinet scheme, and disconcerted the ablest stroke of politics, ever contrived to keep men in place, and to secure an election. Month passed away after month without the expected tidings, and gave our public functionaries to feel that worst sickness of the heart, which arises from hope deferred.

Nevertheless, under the pleasing anticipation of that happy result, Congress was summoned to meet a month before the customary period, and a war message was served up against the adverse belligerent, highly seasoned for the congressional palate, which had become disgusted with water gruel diet. The response of the house was conformable to the spirit of the message, and the report of the committee of foreign relations, through its chairman Mr. Porter, indicated the strongest determination to follow it up speedily and with vigor.

The event however proved that the calculation of our cabinet had been somewhat premature, and that the public good would not have sustained any injury, if Congress had not commenced its session before the time established by law.

Meanwhile the war spirit of our councils had been made known to the imperial government, through its privileged spies, and collected from the columns of newspapers in the pay of administration. Mr. Barlow, by his own account, had danced attendance assiduously enough on the dignitary entrusted with the foreign relations of the empire, with his schedule of grievances in one hand, and his petition for redress in the other; essaying much, effecting nothing.

Subsequent accounts received at Paris from America made it doubtful, whether we were sufficiently in earnest, or had not begun to halt, in our projected scheme of waging war against England. The propulsion given to our councils by imperial diplomacy towards an English war, languishing under the vis inertiæ of our pacific disposition, notwithstanding the token of his majesty's displeasure in the plunder and burning of our ships, seemed to require strengthening and support. The evil was soon perceived, and a remedy quickly proposed for it, in the report of the minister of foreign relations, of which I before made mention, but which, it is observable,

was not found among the documents communicated by the President in his message of May 26, to "place before Congress the actual posture of our relations with France."

This report I take to be the legitimate parent of Mr. Madison's manifesto. It placed our government under the necessity of taking decisive steps, and retained the interests which Mr. Barlow was directed to seek after, as a pledge that those steps should be of the right kind. It committed us to the necessity of resisting the British orders, under the penalty of our flag being considered and treated as denationalized; and let it again be remarked, that we are indebted to an act of resistance against those orders, for our exemption from that penalty, by the decree promulged from the palace of St. Cloud, April 28, 1812.

The term denationalize, has come into familiar use to signify a privation of the rights, which persons or things possess by virtue of belonging to a sovereign community. An effect so absolute can not be supposed to exist without an equivalent criminality, sufficiently defined by the public law, and incontestibly established by proof. To depart from this equitable rule, is to violate the sovereignty of the state, whose citizens or property are affected by the proceeding. The denationalizing of our flag by the Milan decree on

the principles therein set forth, was as hostile an invasion of our sovereignty, as would have been the occupancy of any part of our territory by the imperial legions. The report in question, after reciting the provisions of the Milan decree, proceeds to declare unqualifiedly that "as long as the British orders in council are not revoked, and *the principles of the treaty of Utrecht in relation to neutrals put in force*, the decrees of Berlin and Milan ought to [shall] subsist for the powers who suffer their flag to be denationalized."

"I will have no neutrals" was an oracle his majesty pronounced some years ago. The year 1812 witnesses its verification.

Errors in policy, which proceed from timidity or indecision, rarely fail of adding to difficulty: by procrastinating the crisis, they multiply causes of controversy; by throwing the dispute into other hands, they create an influence almost impossible to counteract.

It belonged to us to resist the early abuses of British maratime power. We complained loudly, but continued passive. What we had not the force to do as principal in the dispute, we however did in our own way in a secondary capacity.

"The decree of Berlin," says the report, "replied to the English order of 1806."—Our Embargo came limping along to aid the common cause.

"The decree of Milan," the report continues,

"replies to the order of 1807." Our non-intercourse act cried out amen.

By the French minister's said report of March, 1812, possessing many properties of a decree, the repeal of the British orders is made to depend on new and totally different conditions The decrees of Berlin and Milan are revived and extended to guarantee those conditions, embracing in their operation, all powers indiscriminately who do not resist the maratime regulations of England, even when consonant with the practice and law of nations.

The declaration of hostilities by our government against Great Britain bears date June 18, 1812.

When the daring attack, on the sovereignty of the United States by the flagitious provisions of the Milan decree, was first committed, Mr. Madison was Secretary of State, and of course not answerable for the conduct of the government in relation to it. But when he was President, and the French cabinet thus formally and officially revived its operation, is it not wonderful, that neither devotion to the public weal, regard to personal honor in his elevated station, nor a sense of responsibility in the faithful discharge of his duties, could admonish him of the course proper to be pursued? Still more wonderful is it, that the Congress of the United States, on a matter so vital

and an enormity so daring, should exhibit no recognition of their sacred trust in representing a free people, but should shew themselves to be in leading strings by an administration itself unmoved, impotent and degenerate. By the decree of Milan, a leaden influence passed over the wings of the American Eagle, and the stars of the union were shorn of their radiance. Is it indeed so, that the tyrant of France shall dictate conditions for the independence of our flag, and terms of exemption from being denationalized, under the jurisdiction of a decree of the empire? And have our rulers on behalf of the people, subscribed to the requisitions set forth for the continuance of sovereignty in the American republic? Let us then hasten to record our title in the registry of the empire; let "Holland, the Hanseatic cities, the coasts which lie between the Zuydersee and the Baltic," now united to France, clang their fetters, while it is proclaimed, *Napoleon admits America to be free.*

I should not be much concerned about any of the direct results of the war we have undertaken against England, under the conduct of an efficient administration. We have before measured swords with that power, and at a time when we had not attained the moiety of our present force. The worst effect of the contest will fall upon the relations of property; upon produce, shipping,

debts, houses, lands and stocks. The commercial states have been for a long time in the crucible, and their precious substances wasted under the successive experiments of our political alchymists. The inland anti-commercial interest, after having aided and officiated in the analysis, must now take its turn in the process of fusion; the dissolution may be expected to produce little else than vapor and sediment.

But I dread the consequences to be apprehended from the manifest implication with French imperial policy, discernible in the very measure of hostilities. I dread being identified through the effect of the war with the aims and objects of France; I dread being allied to her insidious councils; being brought more immediately within the snares of her diplomacy and the action of her intrigue.

However in making calculations on the prosperous issue of a war, the state of preparation and vigor of councils, under which it is commenced, will be naturally taken into account. The value of the objects contended for, and the ability and activity of the enemy, it may be supposed, will have constituted with a wise cabinet the ratio of the resources provided, and of the military strength created for the contest. Where the genius of a government is pacific, and the habits of its people no wise inclined to warlike pur-

suits something ought to be allowed for the disinclination, that will grow out of every conflict, not essentially connected with their independence and freedom.

How far these observations are illustrative of our case, I submit without comment to the thinking part of my fellow-citizens. But I make no hesitation in boldly declaring, that the crude and immature condition of our preparations, when hostilities were recommended, impeaches the administration of improvidence, and that the random and indecisive course of their counsels, during the long period that war was under contemplation, prohibits a reasonable expectation of their conducting it with vigor and judgment, or of their bringing it to a prosperous and happy conclusion.

Nor can it fail to excite a suspicion of sinister and interested purposes, as well as of a crooked and contemptible policy, that they, who had boldness enough to enterprise the war, should lack courage to meet the effects of its burthens upon the public feeling, and should postpone to a future day the levying of the taxes instituted for its prosecution, and essential to the exigencies of the state.

The view I have given of the conduct of our government is very general; but it is not therefore the less instructive. I have purposely ab-

stained from a minute investigation of individual measures, and of insulated acts, at once impolitic and detrimental, because I conceived however much these might have denoted incompetency, that the infirmity was more radical and comprehensive. Neither have I laid any stress upon what is equally manifest; that the old republican ground, on which Mr. Madison and his associates came into power, has been abandoned, and the first principles of republican policy unadvisedly discarded. Have they not avoided necessary appropriations for the protection of our commerce, while they proceeded to make immense expenditure on a commercial dispute not substantially our own? Have they not resorted to the very system of loans and taxation, that in times past occasioned their animadversion, and stimulated their exertions to prevent our republic contracting, what they termed the worst disease of European politics? Have not their economical plans, arbitrarily conceived, after drying up the sources of prosperity, eventuated in heavy impositions on the citizen, while the public chest has been defrauded by legerdemain, and impoverished by the constant access of wasteful schemes and visionary projection?

If what has been advanced, does not warrant the conclusion, that the course plainly pointed out by an intelligent perception of the crises of our

affairs, has been sacrificed to a policy, engendered by the inaptitude of our rulers for governing, and persisted in through the preponderating influence of inland predilections, then al-o it may be disputed that the country is in adverse circumstances, and that the American people are no longer in the downward, but in the ascending scale in the column of national greatness and felicity.

It is moreover strongly inferible from the grounds adduced, that those who stand at the helm of the vessel of state, in order to avoid the breakers on the English shore, have laid her head in a direction towards the smooth waters and smiling coasts of imperial France, where lie hidden rocks and shoals, that render repose unsafe, and contiguity alarming.

It may perhaps be indelicate, fellow citizens, to intimate that the question, "who shall be our next president?" is believed not to have been without its effects on the late decisions of our public councils. The phlogiston in the temper south of the Potomac, might be brought into actual inflammation, by contact with so gross an atmosphere, as could sustain a suspicion, that any motive except patriotism, and any feelings save those of public spirit enter into its composition. Honor and love of country disclaim geographical divisions; but by my soul the people living in

Virginia and the parts adjacent thereto, seem to entertain very singular persuasions, not only of their capacity, but of their right to administer the government of the Union.

From the general considerations offered in the preceding discussion against the continuance of the presidency in Mr. Madison, I am thus insensibly led to those of a local nature, highly forcible and admonitory. If it be true, that on leading public questions the bulk of those, who patronise the measures of his administration, are representatives from the Southern States, may it not be imputed to the centripetal force of a cabinet located among themselves? If it be true that there is a vein of thinking in that quarter on affairs of government, which runs counter to the great interests of the commercial States, can it be considered otherwise than dangerous and highly inimical to the federative principles of the union, to foster such exclusive notions, and to cherish the means whereby they possess scope and exercise? Modes of thinking long indulged in, take deep root; and the shallowest observer of the human mind, knows that opinions are neither less stubborn, nor less arrogant from being erroneous. The consistency of the parts and the due arrangement of them, constitute the beauty and utility of a fabric: so in the union of the States, felicity can result only from skill in forming their various relations

into a beneficial and harmonious combination, while efficacy is given to their separate capacities.

It cannot but be impolitic in the nature of our union to continue its chief magistracy for a very long period, in the citizen of any one state. I give more credit to the efficacy of intrigue and cabal in producing the effect, than to the superiority of intellect and talents in preferring a just claim to the privilege. Praised be the genius of the ancient dominion; the Roman sternness and republican simplicity of its citizens; the humility, the forbearance, and pristine virtues of their character! The sages who framed its system of polity, have admirably combined the excellencies of the codes of Lycurgus and Solon. We see there the Helotes of Sparta to awaken disgust towards debauch and licentiousness.—There the citizens are early taught the virtues of temperance and chastity.—Gymnastic exercises are revived in wrestling rings, and boxing matches; and public race grounds exceed in concourse and value of stake, the games established in Greece for the display of equestrian skill; where the speed of chariots drawn by high mettled coursers, and guided by heroes, competed alone for the shout of empty applause. Yet do I still conceive that the equality of nature holds on either side of the Apalachian in the endowments of Americans, and that men of strong minds are not peculiar to

any quarter of the union. The objection applies to the known process of power in possession, which is ever prone to generate means for its own continuance, and to the consequent inconvenience that results from the influence of those means. The instrumentality of agents in composing a design, confers upon them in some degree, a privilege of counselling, and a weight in the decision of subsequent measures. It necessarily constitutes a junto, whose ingenuity will constantly be exercised on the direction of public concerns, and on deciding who shall fill the high offices of government. Nothing can be more dangerous to the freedom of election, than the machinations of a knot of politicians thus formed, and whose previous intrigues have given them an insight, and an influence, with the numerous minor associations, into which the pursuit of political objects connects the citizens of free States. Nor can any thing tend more to perpetuate favorite schemes, and exclusive systems in governments, than the uniform sway of particular individuals, in effecting the successive exaltation into power of such as from policy or conviction adopt the notions and acknowledge the principles on which those schemes and systems are founded. It is probably on the operation of a rule of this kind, that a suspicion has existed

in the minds of many in regard to Virginia politics: a suspicion which, whether groundless or not, proves the natural and obvious tendency of the irregularity of continuing the executive of the union in a particular State for an undue length of time.

To the Candidate announced by the State of New-York no local objections can be raised. New-York has never yet enjoyed the dignity of the Presidency. Central in geographical position, and stretching from the Atlantic to the cataract of Niagara, it claims a near affinity with every object of maratime or interior concern that affects the union. It is entitled to and will possess, by virtue of its population, much weight in the national councils. Agriculture is the great source of its wealth, but in a commercial view, in the double relations of inland and foreign trade, it has no competitor. Its manufacturing establishments are progressing with rapid strides, and already claim a capital of many millions. Of course the State may not be supposed to have a leading interest in the institution of a policy of government, opposed to an equal participation of benefit among the members of the confederation, and to the full enjoyment of the separate local and natural advantages, that diversify the several portions of our extensive territory.

Dewitt Clinton, the Candidate of New-York, is thus presented most favorably to the union for the high office of President.

The chief advantage tendered to the nation, in the prospect of Mr. Clinton's elevation, consists in his not being pledged to a particular system, nor to a particular set of men. If he should be elected, he will come into office with hands unfettered; with a mind unswayed by animosities, foreign or domestic; with persuasions of the utility and benefits of commerce, that entitle it to the protection of government.

Nor although uncommitted in policy, can a doubt be entertained of that Gentleman's efficient vindication of his country's rights.

His capacity for managing our national affairs, is declared by the ability which he has displayed in the various trusts confided to him, whereby he has acquired great consideration even with his political adversaries. To the arrogant demand for proof of his eminent talents, it might be sufficient in relation to existing competition, to reply, that whenever a field has been afforded for their exercise, he has uniformly obtained esteem and applause.

The calumny, that charges him with intrigue, must rest contented until it adduces the grounds of crimination, with being informed, that Mr. Clinton was the person who introduced that

amendment of the constitution, and to whose influence its adoption was chiefly owing, which puts the presidency beyond the scope of the intrigues it was originally liable to, through the name of the person intended for that office not being designated.

The unanimity of the republican members of the legislature of New-York, sufficiently attests their confidence in his attachment to the pure republican principles of the constitution of the United States. Yet it is not believed, that he would carry into the general government, a principle of exclusion, as a principle of republicanism. There may be other merit besides the merit of party.

I am not the eulogist of Mr. Clinton: I am neither connected with him in sameness of pursuits, nor indebted to him for any favor. Truth allows me to say, that in the several stations he has filled, Executive, Legislative, and Judicial, he has commanded admiration for his abilities, and impressed on all minds, a sense of an energetic and decided character. Estimable in private life, and irreproachable in his public career, he presents the united claims of talents and virtue, on the affections and support of the American people.

In reviewing the course of our foreign affairs in their relations with England and with France, I have endeavored fairly to test the claim of the administration to our approval, and feel invul-

nerable to every charge of inclining towards either of those powers. The position I take is, that an invasion of our acknowledged and ascertained rights should meet repulse by arms, if not yielded to remonstrance, and that too, with promptitude and vigor. Such ought to have been the course of our government with regard to England in 1806 and 1807. But when the Emperor of France by the decree of Berlin, in effect, terminated our negociations upon existing differences with the British government, when by that decree assuming a broader violation of our rights, he presented an original offence, not merely at variance with neutral claims, but destructive of sovereign power, it became the imperious duty of the administration to set its face against the outrage, and to contest it by war. There would have been dignity and safety in such a course: reason and right counselled to it. The speculative mind of a philosopher, the timid bosoms of time-serving politicians decided differently; and what has been the result? New disgraces, new violations and incalculable spoilation, till the aggressors are apparently convinced they are in the right, and risque a war in defence of wrong, while our rulers hide their incompetency beneath restrictive systems, and their desertion of the public weal behind the outrages of the belligerents.

I have not addressed you, Fellow-Citizens, as a party man. I place no merit in declaring my political sentiments. My business with you relates to a national question. Test me by what is written. Let not republicans condemn me, because I will not be bound in the fetters of conformity to caucus recommendations from the focus of intrigue, and the theatre of cabals. Let me not be blamed for separating myself from those, who resemble silly sheep following the bell-wether in his leap down the precipice of destruction. I have not said, "We are all federalists, we are all republicans," but I address myself to men of all parties as having an equal concern in the destinies of the republic. I would not propitiate the federalists by disguising my political peruasions. If there is any in that party, who feels indifferent to the welfare and glory of his country, unless federalism is ascendant, I would not be considered as addressing myself to him: he is the slave of party-spirit and unworthy the name of Freeman.

TOUCHSTONE.

W 73

WERT
BOOKBINDING
Grantville, Pa.
March - April 1988
We're Quality Bound